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Building is named after Major General Davis

by Rich Garcia, Directed Energy Directorate

Maj. Gen. Richard W. Davis

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. – An Air Force officer, who served at Kirtland in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, advancing in grade to major general, was honored at Kirtland AFB on August 27th with the dedication of a research facility in his name.

The building being named for the general officially opened in June 2000 and is an $8.4 million, 29,000-square-foot research facility. Scientists are using the facility to do state-of-the-art research and development in chemical, electrical and hybrid lasers that can be used in air, ground, and space-based systems.

Maj. Gen. Richard W. Davis, who died while on active duty this February, was the subject of a memorial ceremony at the Air Force Research Laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate. At the time of his death, Gen. Davis was serving as the director of the National Security Space Architect, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence in Alexandria, Va.

With more than 30 years of active duty, he began his Air Force career at Kirtland AFB in a division that later became part of the Research Laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate. He returned to the Laboratory twice: in August of 1988 for nearly three years and in July of 1993 for two years. The last time, he served as commander of the Phillips Laboratory, which became part of the Research Laboratory in 1997.

The general served in a variety of Air Force positions that varied from assistant professor of physics at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., to serving on a National Security Council-level interagency group providing guidance on nuclear weapons research and development. He also directed an eight-nation study on high-power microwaves, was a founding member of the Strategic Defense Initiative, and served on the vice president's joint Department of Defense-Department of Energy group looking into space exploration for the NASA.

The Richard W. Davis Advanced Laser Facility is a two-story structure with six major laboratories and offices for approximately 50 people. Three of the laboratories are class 10,000 clean rooms and three are class 100,000 clean rooms. The facility also houses several smaller laboratories, a chemistry lab, an electronics lab and two conference rooms.

The facility was designed so that interior configurations could be rearranged to fit the needs of new experiments. Two of the laboratories are dedicated to chemical laser work, such as the chemical oxygen-iodine laser that was developed by directorate scientists. That laser is being used for the Airborne Laser –a laser-carrying jumbo jet that can destroy ballistic missiles soon after being launched. The other four laser laboratories are used for solid-state or electrical laser research. **@**